

Message Text

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EXDIS

NEA FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IZ
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO GOI ON IMPROVING RELATIONS

1. AS THE TIME APPROACHES FOR ME TO MAKE MY FAREWELL CALLS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, I BELIEVE TIME MIGHT NOW BE RIPE FOR ME TO TAKE A LIMITED INITIATIVE TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT OF U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. OUR PROMPT AND IMPRESSIVE RESPONSE TO GOI'S REQUEST FOR HIGH QUALITY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS CREATED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, AN OPENING WHICH I BELIEVE WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT. FACT THAT REQUEST WAS MADE THROUGH ME HAS ELEVATED MY STANDING IN EYES OF GOI BUREAUCRACY AND MAY OPEN SOME DOORS THAT WERE CLOSED TO ME IN THE PAST. IN ANY CASE, MY APPROACHING DEPARTURE MEANS THAT I WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE IN UNDERTAKING AN INITIATIVE EVEN IF IT IS REJECTED BY GOI.

2. I THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT I BE INSTRUCTED TO CONVEY MESSAGE AT HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL IN FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH WOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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A. CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS SINCERELY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS AND IS READY TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TIME WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS.

B. AS ONE STEP IN IMPROVING THE DIALOGUE LOOKING

TOWARD AN EVENTUAL RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS,
SECRETARY VANCE WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE A SHORT
STOP IN BAGHDAD DURING COURSE OF HIS NEXT
MIDDLE EAST TRIP FOR A MEETING WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN.

C. DURING THIS MEETING SEC. VANCE WILL GIVE PERSONAL
ASSURANCE TO SADDAM HUSSEIN THAT USG IS NOT NOW
SUPPORTING AND WILL NOT IN FUTURE SUPPORT KURDISH
DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AGAINST GOVT. OF IRAQ.

D. SEC. VANCE WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN HEARING
GOI'S VIEWS ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND ON ITS
ULTIMATE RESOLUTION, AS WELL AS ON ANY OTHER ISSUES
SADDAM HUSSEIN MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS. SEC. VANCE
WOULD, OF COURSE, BE WILLING TO EXPLAIN THE UNITED
STATES POSITION ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND
ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

E. DURING THE MEETING MODALITIES FOR AN EVENTUAL
RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS COULD BE DISCUSSED. ONE
POSSIBILITY WOULD BE AN UNDERSTANDING IN PRINCIPLE
TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH THE SPECIFIC DATE TO BE
FIXED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT AT A LATER TIME. THIS
APPROACH WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THE ONE USED IN
RESTORING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ALGERIA
AND THE UNITED STATES.

3. FROM HUSSEIN'S POINT OF VIEW, SUCH A PROPOSAL
WOULD HAVE SOME OBVIOUS ATTRACTIONS. IRAQIS WOULD
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BE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE ASSURANCE OF U.S. NON-
SUPPORT FOR KURDISH DISSIDENTS. SUGGESTION THAT
SEC. VANCE WOULD LIKE TO LISTEN TO IRAQ'S POINT OF
VIEW WOULD BE VERY FLATTERING TO HUSSEIN WHO HAS
CRAVING TO PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE ON THE INTER-
NATIONAL SCENE.

4. AT SAME TIME, IRAQIS ARE HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE,
AND WOULD NO DOUBT SUSPECT A TRAP. THEY ARE QUITE
CONSCIOUS OF FACT THAT BAATHI REGIME HAS GIVEN USG
LITTLE REASON TO BE NICE TO THEM AND WOULD PROBABLY
WONDER WHAT WE REALLY HAD IN MIND. SADDAM MAY ALSO
REASON THAT HIS INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION AND HIS
ALWAYS DELICATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
SOVIET UNION COULD NOT NOW STAND THE STRAIN OF AN
OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE
WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY TRIGGER AN AVALANCHE OF
SPECULATION AND RUMORS ABOUT NEW IRAQI POLICIES
TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

5. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT WE WOULD
HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE AND MUCH TO GAIN BY MAKING
THE SUGGESTED DEMARCHE. IF IRAQIS DO NOT RESPOND
POSITIVELY WE WOULD THEN HAVE AN ADDITIONAL REASON
TO DELAY ASSIGNMENT OF MY REPLACEMENT AND THUS SIGNAL
TO GOI THAT WE BELIEVE IT IS NOW THEIR TURN TO MAKE
THE NEXT MOVE. FACT THAT THEY HAD TURNED DOWN
MY APPROACH WOULD UNDERLINE THE MESSAGE.
WILEY

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